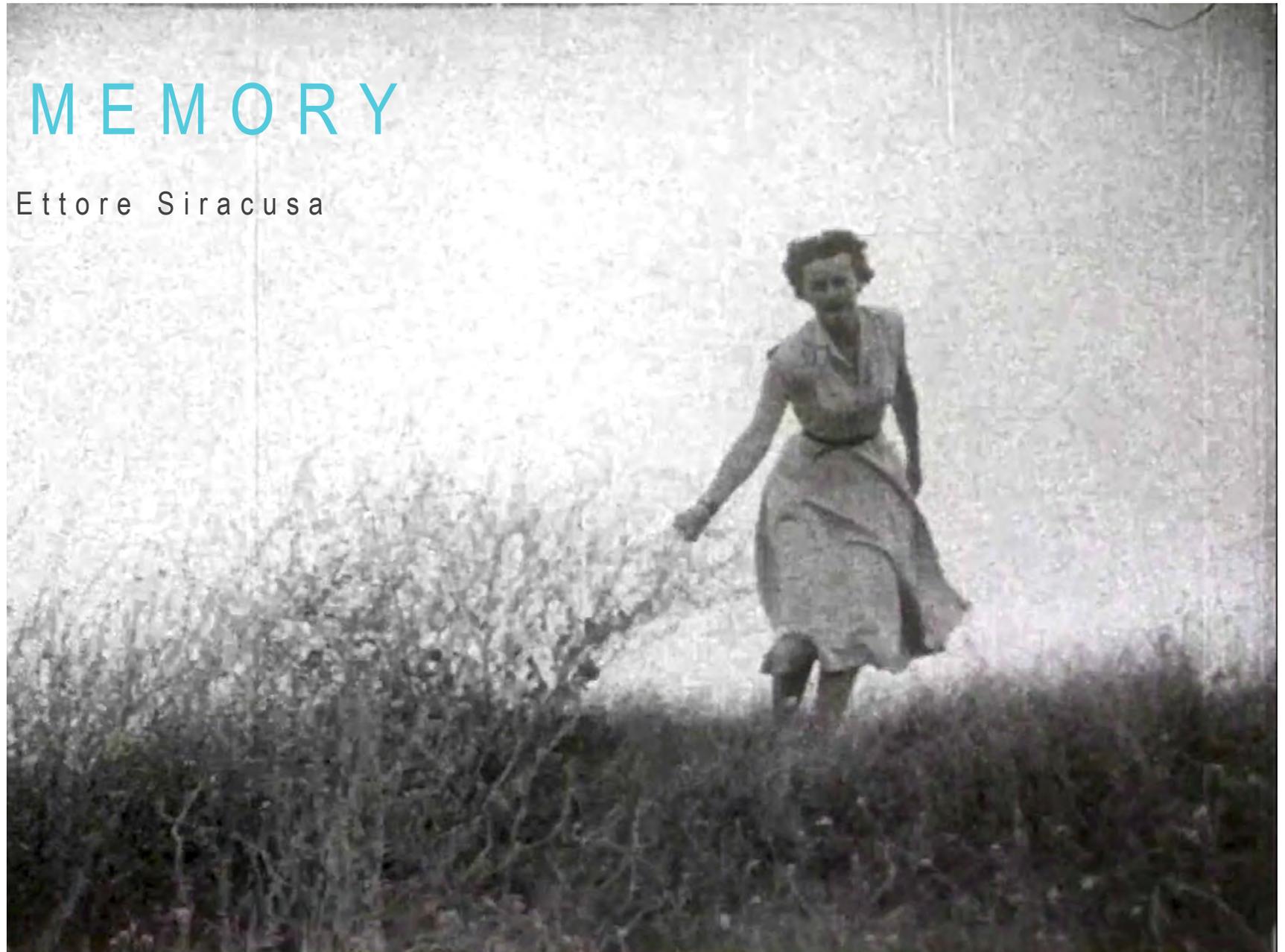


HEM OF MEMORY

A film art work by Ettore Siracusa

Museo Italiano

199 Faraday Street, Carlton
18 September - 20 October 2018
Tuesday - Friday 10am to 5pm
Saturday 12.30 to 5pm



'Now you are lifting the hem of memory
and peeping underneath' Hazel Smith



‘Every creative act, to be original, must invite in the alien, open its door to migrants.’ Hazel Smith

The two-channel video installation, *Hem of Memory*, is one of a five-part film art project titled, *After/Il Contratto*, currently in development and production. The series draws on the feature length film, *Il Contratto*, filmed in Melbourne in the early 1950's, directed by Giorgio Mangiamele, and left unfinished and silent, without a soundtrack.

Hem of Memory unravels ghostly echoes, refractions and reconstructed remembrances of cinematic and personal histories of migration.

The video art work combines three audio visual narrative threads: parts of a 2008 video documentary of Halina Kiselevsky - who played the female lead role of Claudia in *Il Contratto* - viewing the film for the first time on a television screen; reconfigured silent images, scenes and remnants of sound traces found on the film's mute soundtrack prior to its restoration by the NFSA; literary interpretations from poet, Hazel Smith, drawn from the film and video sources, whose poetic narrative highlights Halina's thoughts, feelings and memories.

The three narratives are displaced and resituated in a tailor shop in North Carlton: the space becoming the enactment and reflective surface (a projection like a screen) of remembrances and vanishing images.

There is no correct gaze, no camera that unravels the truth...

Smith's prose is like a weaving: the motifs of dressmaking and stitching, spoken in the text, and in Halina's own life story, find their ambiguous and allegorical correspondences in the fragmentary montage of images on the double screens and the haunted soundtrack of the video.

Visuals, sounds and words draw out multiple narrative meanings, moving - at times close or distant from one another - alongside fragmentary scenes from *Il Contratto* and the video documentary record of Halina's watching the unremembered images of an other, younger, self she has all but forgotten... like a passing film.



Hem of Memory

2 Channel HD video, duration 13.12 minutes (2018)

Video realized by Ettore Siracusa

With

Hazel Smith, Chris Luscri, Halina Kiselvsky, Marcus Bergner, John Friend, Darcy Read, Jackson Fumberger

Archival film source

Il Contratto (1953) by Giorgio Mangiamele

Exhibition Launch

18 September 2018

Live music performance with cello improvisations by Katherine Philp and video projection of edited scenes from *Il Contratto*

Biographies

Ettore Siracusa Film and video works explore migrant narratives and film language in relation to contemporary art field of expanded cinema and the visual arts. Recent films include *Manufacture* (2014 HD video 4.33 mins colour); *Trails of Things Past and Passing*. (2013, HD Video, 10:39 mins). See <http://museumofmigrations.net>

Hazel Smith Recent published works of poetry include *Word Migrants* and *Erotics of Geography*, three CDs of poetry and numerous multimedia collaborations.

Chris Luscri Independent curator and producer based in Melbourne. His work is associated with experimental, expanded, essayistic modes of filmic practice.

Acknowledgements

My gratitude to Hazel Smith for contributing her vision and poetry to the making of the video and Halina Kiselvsky whose unexpected appearance marked the beginning of this project.

Warmest thanks to Rosemary Mangiamele and Andrew Pike for copyright permission to use the film source, *Il Contratto*, and their encouraging and generous support during research and production.

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Grateful thanks to Gina Basso for her participation in the short documentary and interview and, with her son, Roberto Basso, giving permission to film further scenes in her shop.

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